

Listing of Claims:

1. – 3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) Packet forwarding equipment for connecting multicast client nodes and a multicast network including at least one multicast source server, comprising:

a translation unit for translating a first request of joining or leaving a multicast group which is sent from one of said multicast client nodes that cannot designate an address of a multicast source server of the multicast group, into a second request of joining or leaving the multicast group with designating the address of a multicast source server of the multicast group;

an interface for transferring the second request to said multicast network, and

a table comprised of a plurality of entries each indicating relations of the address of the multicast group, the address of the multicast client node, and the address of the multicast source corresponding to the address of the multicast group and the address of the multicast client node,

wherein when the first request of joining or leaving the multicast group is issued from the multicast client node which does not have a function of designating the address of the multicast source server, said table is searched for an entry including the address of the multicast client node which issued said first request of joining or leaving and the address of the multicast group to which said first request of joining or leaving was sent, thereby to designate the address of the multicast source server indicated by the retrieved entry,

wherein the designated address of the multicast source server of the multicast group is determined by the translation unit on the basis of an address of said one of said multicast client nodes and an address of the multicast group to which said first request of joining or leaving was sent from said multicast client node,

wherein when the address of the multicast source server of the entry retrieved from said table is “don’t care”, said first request is processed as a request of joining or leaving an any-source multicast group which does not designate the address of a multicast source server.

5. – 15. (canceled)

16. (previously presented) Packet forwarding equipment for connecting multicast client nodes and a multicast network including at least one multicast source server, comprising:

a translation unit for translating an any-source type of request of joining or leaving a multicast group which is sent from one of said multicast client nodes into a source-specific type of request of joining or leaving a source-specific multicast group; and

an interface for transferring the source-specific type of request to said multicast network,

a table comprised of a plurality of entries each indicating relations of the address of the multicast group, the address of the multicast client node, and the address of the multicast source server corresponding to the address of the multicast group and the address of the multicast client node,

wherein an address of the multicast source server of the source-specific multicast group is determined by the translation unit on the basis of an address of said one of said multicast client nodes and an address of the multicast group to which said any-source type of request of joining or leaving was sent from said multicast client node:

wherein when the any-source type of request of joining or leaving the multicast group is issued from the multicast client node which does not have a function of sending the source-specific type of request of joining or leaving, said table is searched for an entry including the address of the multicast client node which issued said any-source type of request of joining or leaving and the address of the multicast group to which said any-source type of request of joining or leaving was sent, thereby to designate the address of the multicast source server indicated by the retrieved entry,

wherein when the address of the multicast source server of the entry retrieved from said table is "don't care", said any-source type of request is processed and translated into the source-specific type of request.

17. (canceled)